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# OPINION

MONDAY  
SEPTEMBER 3, 2007

## ***Keep union balloting***

Re "Bill would change union recruiting:"  
So UFW President Arturo Rodriguez expressed consternation that while 80 percent of farmworkers expressed interest in forming a union, only 47 percent voted in favor of forming a union seven days later.

May I suggest that Rodriguez open a dictionary and learn the difference between the two words "interest" and "want."

Just because someone has an interest in something does not necessarily mean they want it. The union knows this; they just want to cry and stamp their feet when things don't turn the way they predict or want them to turn out.

As a nurse, I am intimately familiar with the pro-unionizing methods of the unions and the anti-unionizing methods of the employers. Both sides can and often get very committed and emotional about their argument, and both have been known to cross the line — except the media rarely report when union members cross the "organizing line."

I am sure that if not for the secret ballot vote, that union might have triumphed in unionizing the nurses (at Cedars-Sinai hospital) — but the nurses were able to vote for what they wanted in safety, behind the protection of the secret ballot.

I think Gov. Schwarzenegger should apply a simple test prior to vetoing or signing this "card-check" bill. The test is if this bill were authorizing employees to use a similar "card

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## **YOUR VIEW**

check" method to show support to remain union-free had been promoted for and by the "business lobby" would the Legislature have passed it? If the answer is yes, then by all means sign it into law; but if the answer is no, then it requires a veto.

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# Bill would change union recruiting

By DON THOMPSON  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**SACRAMENTO** — Unions would be able to organize farm workers by collecting signed membership cards instead of holding an election with secret ballots under a bill sent Monday to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Supporters said the change would deter intimidation by growers and could help boost the ranks of unions.

In turn, farmers predicted it would have the opposite effect and allow coercion by union organizers.

Schwarzenegger has 30 days to consider the bill after the Senate agreed to technical Assembly amendments on a party-line, 23-14 vote. He has not taken a position.

The United Farm Workers union has stopped trying to organize laborers while it waits to see if the bill becomes law, union president Arturo Rodriguez said.

The union sought the change after suffering a loss two years ago while trying to organize workers employed by one of the nation's top producers of table grapes.

Rodriguez said 80 percent of workers expressed interest in forming a union, but only 47 percent voted in favor by the time of the election a week later.

"Anybody who looked at that says, 'What happened in seven days?' Obviously there had to be a lot of intimidation, coercion," he said in an interview.

That organizing vote was upheld by the state Agricultural Labor Relations Board, said Roy Gabriel, a lobbyist for the California Farm Bureau Federation, which is urging Schwarzenegger to veto the bill.

"They don't seem to be that successful, so they want an easier way to organize," Gabriel said. "We think this totally cir-

cumvents the whole secret ballot process. It's beyond my understanding how a union organizer coming up to you and saying 'Sign this card' is free choice."

There are strict rules against intimidation on both sides, Gabriel said.

"The employer should have the right to give their side of the argument," he said. "Just because they (union organizers) lose an election doesn't mean there is grower intimidation."

That argument wasn't enough to persuade a majority of Democratic legislators who supported the bill by Sen. Carole Migden, D-San Francisco.

The measure passed the Assembly in July and was sent to Schwarzenegger over Republican objections.

Rodriguez, of the UFW, and four laborers met last week with Schwarzenegger to lobby for the bill.

In other legislative action Monday, the Assembly approved a bill 64-4 that would prohibit an employer or anyone else from requiring a person to have an identification device implanted under their skin.

The measure is one of a series of bills proposed by Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, to control use of radio frequency identification devices. They can be placed in badges, passports, driver's licenses and on bodies to transmit radio signals with identifying information.

The Assembly also approved another Simitian bill that would prohibit drivers under age 18 from using a cell phone when they are behind the wheel. A Simitian bill approved last year requires adults to use a hands-free device when talking on a cell phone while driving and takes effect next July.

The new bill would prohibit 15-, 16- or 17-year-olds from using a cell phone or other "mobile service device" while driving.

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